SECTION FOUR

# THE SALT LAKE HERALD

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# THE KING'S VISIT.

By Robert Barr.

"NO, NO," said the king decisively. "Bring them in. I'll have none cast into prison without at least a hearing. Have any of your men been killed?"

"No, your majesty," replied Sir Donald, "but some of them have wounds they will not forget in a hurry; the Highlandmen fought like cats."

"How many are there of them?" asked the king.

"Something more than a score, with a piper, led by a breechless ruffian, although I must say he knows what to do with a sword."

"All armed, you say?"

"Every one of them but the piper. About half an hour ago they came marching up the main street of Stirling, each man with his sword drawn, and the pipes skirling death and defiance. They had the whole town at their heels, laughing and jeering at them, and imitating the wild Highland music. At first they paid little attention, but in the square their leader gave a word in Gaelic, and at once the whole company swerved about and charged the crowd. There was an instant panic among the townspeople, who fled in all directions. No one was hurt, for the Highlandmen struck them with the flat of their swords.

"It serves them right," commented the king. "I hope it will teach them manners. What followed?"

"A whistle from their leader collected his helots again, and so they marched straight from the square to the gates of the castle. The two soldiers on guard crossed pikes before them, but the leader, without a word, struck down their weapons and attempted to march in. There was a bit of a scuffle at the gate, then the bugle sounded, and we surrounded them, trying to disarm them peaceably at first, but they fought like demons, and so there's some sore heads among them."

"You disarmed them, of course?"

"Certainly, your majesty."

"Very well; bring them in, and let us hear what they have to say for themselves."

The doors were flung open, a sharp command was given, and presently there entered the group of Highlanders, disarmed and with their elbows tied behind their backs. A strong guard accompanied them on either side. The Highlanders were men of magnificent physique, enhanced by the picturesque costume they wore, in spite of the fact that in some instances this costume was in tatters and the wearers cut and bleeding. Their leader was a truly magnificent specimen of the human race, who strode up the long room with an imperial swagger such as never before had been seen in Stirling. He marched on until he came before the king, and there took his stand, without any indication of bowing his bonneted head or bending his sturdy bare knees. The moment the leader set his foot across the threshold, the unabashed piper immediately protruded his chest and struck up a wild "Salute to the Chief."

"Stop it, ye deevil!" cried the captain of the guard. "How dare you set up such a squawking in the presence of the king?" and he struck the mouthpiece from the lips of the performer. This, however, did not cause a cessation of the music, for the bag under the piper's elbow was filled with wind and the fingers of the musician bravely kept up the strain on the reed chanter with its nine holes, and thus he played until his chief came to a stand before the king. The king gazed with undisguised admiration upon the foremost Highlander, and said quietly to the captain of the guard.

"Unbind him!"

On finding his arms released the mountaineer stretched them out twice, then folded them across his breast, making no motion, however, to remove his plumed bonnet, although every one else in the room except himself and his men was uncovered.

"You have come in from the country," began the king, a suspicion of a smile hovering about his lips, "to enjoy the metropolitan delights of Stirling. How are you satisfied with your reception?"

The big Highlander made no reply, but frowned heavily.

"These savages," suggested Sir Donald, "do not understand anything but the Gaelic. Is it your majesty's pleasure that the interpreter be called?"

"Yes, bring him in."

The interpreter put the question in Gaelic, and was answered with gruff brevity by the marauder. The interpreter, bowing low to the king, said smoothly:

"This man humbly begs to inform your majesty—"

"Speak truth, MacPherson!" cautioned the king. "Translate faithfully exactly what he says. Our friend here, by the look of him, does not do anything humbly or fawn or beg. Translate accurately. What does he say?"

"He says, your majesty, he will hold no communication with me, because I am of an inferior clan, which is untrue. The MacPhersons were a civilized clan centuries ago, while the MacNabs are not to this day."

The MacNab's hand darted to his left side, but finding no sword to his grasp it fell away again.

"You are a liar!" cried the chief in very passable English, which was not to be misunderstood. "The MacPhersons are no clan, but an insignificant branch of the Chattan. 'Touch not the Cat' is your motto, and a good one, for a MacPherson can scratch, but he cannot handle the broadsword."

MacPherson's hand also sought instinctively the hilt of his sword, but the presence in which he stood restricted him.

"It is quite safe," he said, with something like the spit of a cat, "for a heathen to insult a Christian in the presence of his king, and the MacNabs have ever shown a taste for the cautious cause."

"Tut, tut," cried the king, with impatience, "am I to find myself involved in a Highland feud in my own hall? MacPherson, it seems this man does not require your interpreting, so, perhaps, it will further the peace of our realm if you withdraw quietly."

MacPherson, with a low obeisance, did so; then to MacNab the king spoke:

"Sir, as it appears you are acquainted with our language, why did you not reply to the question I put to you?"

"Because I would have you know it was not the proper kind of question to ask the like of me. I am a descendant of kings."

"Well, I am a descendant of kings myself, though sorry I should be to defend all their actions."

"Your family only began with Robert the Bruce; mine was old ere he came to the throne."

"That may well be; still you must admit that what Robert lacked in ancestry, he furnished forth in ability."

"But the Clan MacNab defeated him at the battle of Del Rhi."

"True, with some assistance, which you ignore, from Alexander of Argyll. However, if this discussion is to become a competition in history I may be allowed to add that my good ancestor, Robert, did not forget the actions of the MacNabs at Del Rhi, and later overran their country, dismantled their fortresses, leaving the clan in a more sane and chastened condition than that in which he found it. But what has all this to do with your coming storming into a peaceable town like Stirling?"

"I came," said the chief, "because of the foray you have mentioned. I came because Robert the Bruce desolated our country."

"By my good sword!" cried James. "Speaking as one king to another, your revenge is somewhat belated, a lapse of two centuries should have outlawed the debt. Did you expect, then, to take Stirling with twenty men?"

"I expected King James the Fifth to rectify the wrong done by King Robert the First."

"But I have already disclaimed responsibility for the deeds of ancestors less remote than good King Robert."

"You have made proclamation in the Highlands that the chieftains must bring you proof of their right to occupy their lands."

"I have, and some preferred to me their deeds of tenure, others prepared to fight; the cases have been settled in both instances. To which of these two classes do you belong, chief of the Clan MacNab?"

"To neither. I cannot submit to you our parchments, because Robert, your ancestor, destroyed them. I cannot fight the army of the Lowlands, because my clan is small; therefore, I, Finlay MacNab, come to you in peace, asking you to repair the wrong done by your ancestor."

"Indeed!" cried the king. "If the present advent typifies your idea of a peaceful visit, then God forfend that I should ever meet you in anger."

"'I came in peace and have been shamefully used."

"You must not hold that against us," said James. "Look you, now, if I had come storming at your castle door, sword in hand, how would you have treated me, Finlay the Fifth?"

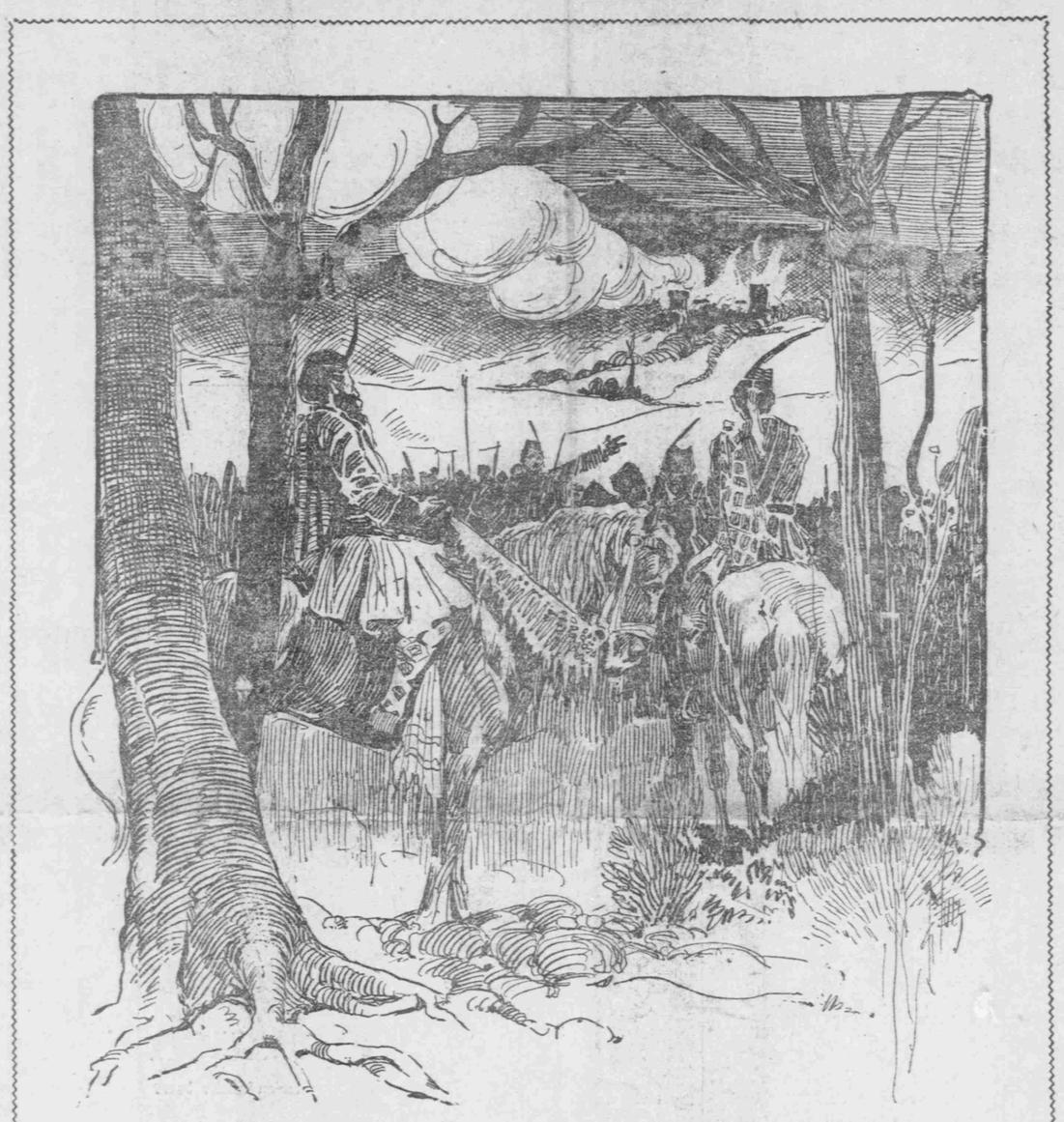
"If you had come with only twenty men behind you I should treat you with all the hospitality of Glendochart, which far exceeds that of Stirling."

"It has all been a mistake," said the king with great cordiality. "The parchment you seek shall be given to you, and I trust that your generosity, Lord of Glendochart, will allow me to amend your opinion of Stirling hospitality. I shall take it kindly if you will be my guests in the castle until my officers of law repair the harshness of my ancestor, Robert." Then, turning to the guard, the king continued:

"Unbind these gentlemen and return to them their arms."

The captain of the guard brought the chief his sword and would have presented it to him, but the king himself arose and took the weapon in his own hand, tendering it to its owner. The chieftain accepted the sword and rested its point on the floor, then in dignified native courtesy he doffed his broad, feathered bonnet.

"Sire," he said, with slow deliberation, "Scotland has a king that this good blade shall ever be proud to serve."



THE VALLEY FOR MILES UP AND DOWN WAS LIGHTER THAN THE SUN EVER MADE IT.

For three days the MacNabs were the guests of the king in the castle, while the legal documents were being prepared. King and chieftain walked the town together, and all that Stirling had to show MacNab beheld.

On the last night there was a banquet, which was the best that Stirling could bestow, in honor of the Clan MacNab. The great hall was decorated with the colors of the clan, and at the further end had been painted the arms of the MacNab. Five pipers of the king's court had learned the "Salute to the Chief," and now, headed by MacNab's own, they paced up and down the long room, making it ring with their warlike music. The king and the chieftain came in together, and as the latter took his place at his host's right hand his impassive face betrayed no surprise at the splendid preparations which had been made for his reception. Many dainties were placed on the ample board cunningly prepared by foreign cooks, the like of which the Highlanders had never before tasted, but the mountaineers ate stolidly whatever was set in front of them, and if unusual flavors saluted their palates the strangers made no sign of approval or the reverse.

The red wine of Burgundy, grown old in the king's cellars, they drank like water, emptying their tankards as fast as the attendant could refill them. Soon the ruddy fluid, whose potency had been underestimated, began to have its effect, and the dinner table became noisy as the meal progressed, songs bursting forth now and then, with strange shouts and cries more familiar to the hills of Loch Tay than to the rafters of Stirling. The chief himself lost the solemn dignity which had at first characterized him, and as he emptied flagon after flagon, he boasted loudly of the prowess of his clan; foretold what he would do in future fields now that he was allied with the King of Scotland. Often forgetting himself, he fell into the Gaelic, roaring forth a torrent of words that had no meaning for many there present, then, remembering the king did not understand the language, he expressed his pity for a man in such condition, saying the Gaelic was the oldest tongue in existence, and the first spoken by human lips upon this earth. To all of which the smiling king nodded approval.

At last MacNab sprang to his feet, holding aloft his brimming flagon, and called for cheers for the King of Scotland, a worthy prince who knew well how to entertain a brother prince. Repeating this in Gaelic, his men, who had also risen with their chief, now sprang upon the benches, where, standing unsteadily, they raised a series of yells so wild that a shudder of fear passed through many of the courtiers. The chief, calling to his piper, commanded him instantly to compose a pibroch for the king, and that ready musician, swelling with pride, marched up and down and round and round the great hall pouring forth a triumphal quickstep with many wonderful flourishes and variations. Then at a word from the chief each man placed his flagon on the table, whipped out his sword, swung it overhead, to the amazement of the courtiers, for it is not in accord with etiquette to show cold steel to the eyes of the king. Down came the blades instantly and together, each man splitting in two the goblet he had drunk from.

"You must all come to Loch Tay," cried the chief, "and I will show you a banqueting hall in honor of James V such as you have never seen before." Then to the horror of the courtiers he suddenly smote the king on the back with his open palm and cried, "Jamie, my lad, you'll come and visit me at Loch Tay?"

The smitten king laughed heartily and replied:

"Yes, Finlay, I will."

The next day the MacNabs set faces toward the north on their long tramp home.

"What proud 'deevils' they are!" said Sir David Lyndsay to the king after the company had departed. "I have been through the MacNab country from one end of it to the other, and there is not a decent hut on the hillside, let alone a castle fit to entertain a king, yet the chief gives an invitation in the heat of wine, and when he is sobered he is too proud to admit that he cannot make good the words he has uttered."

"That very thing is troubling me," replied the king, "but it's a long time till July, and between now and then we will make him some excuse for not returning his visit, and thus avoid putting the old man to shame."

"But that, too, will offend him beyond repair," objected the poet.

"Well, we must lay our heads together, Davie," answered the king, "and think of some way that will neither be an insult nor a humiliation."

Affairs of state gave James the valid excuse he required, and so he sent a commission to the chief of the MacNabs. "His majesty," said the head commissioner, "is entertaining the ambassadors from Spain and from France, and likewise a legate from the pope. If he came north he must at least bring with him these great noblemen with their retinues, and while he would have been glad to visit you with some of his own men he could not impose upon your hospitality by bringing also a large number of strangers and foreigners."

"Tell his majesty," replied MacNab with dignity, "that whether he bring with him the King of Spain, the Emperor of France or even the pope himself, none of these princes is, in the estimation of MacNab, superior to James the Fifth of Scotland. The entertainment, therefore, which the king graciously condescends to accept, is certainly good enough for any foreigners that may accompany him, be their nobility ever so high."

When this reply was reported to the king he first smiled and then sighed.

"I can do nothing further," he said. "Return to MacNab and tell him that the pope's legate desires to visit the Priory on Loch Tay. Tell the chief that we will take the boat along the lake on the day arranged. Say that the foreigners are anxious to taste the venison of the hills, and that nothing could be better than to give us a dinner under the trees. Tell him that he need not be at any trouble to provide us lodging, for we shall return to the island Priory and there sleep."

In the early morning the king and his followers, the ambassadors and their trains embarked and sailed from the island Priory the length of the beautiful lake; the numerous craft being driven through the water by strong northern oarsmen, their wild chanting choruses echoing back from the mountains. The evening before horses for the party had been led through forests, over the hills and along the strand to the meeting place at the other end of the lake. Here they were greeted by the MacNabs, pipers and all, and, mounting the horses, the gay cavalcade was led up the valley. The king had warned their foreign highnesses that they were not to expect in this wilderness the niceties of Rome, Paris or Madrid, and each of the ambassadors expressed his delight at the prospect of an outing certain to contain so much that was novel and unusual to them.

A summer haze hung in the valley, and when the king came in sight of the stronghold of the MacNabs he rubbed his eyes in wonder, thinking the misty uncertainty of the atmosphere was playing tricks with his vision. There, before them, stood the most bulky edifice, the most extraordinary pile he had ever beheld. At one end a great square keep arose, its amazing height looming gigantically in the gauze-like magic of the mist. A high wall, machicolated at the top, connected this keep with a small octagonal tower, whose twin was placed some distance to the left, leaving an opening between for a wide entrance. The two octagonal towers formed a sort of frame for a roaring waterfall in the background. From the second octagonal tower another extended lofty wall connected it with a round peel as high as the keep. This castle of a size so enormous that it made all others its beholders had ever seen shrink into comparative insignificance, was surrounded by a bailey wall; outside of that was a moat which proved to be a foaming river fed by the volume of water which came down the precipice behind the castle.

"We have many great strongholds in Italy," said the pope's legate, "but never have I seen anything to compare with this."

"Oh," said MacNab, slightingly, "we are but a small clan; you should see the Highland castles further north; they are of stone; indeed, our own fortresses, which are further inland, are also of stone. This is merely our pleasure house, built of pine trees."

"A castle of logs!" exclaimed the pope's legate. "I never before heard of such a thing."

They crossed the bridge, passed between the two octagonal towers and entered the extensive court yard, surrounded by the castle itself; a court yard broad enough to afford maneuvering ground for an army. The interior walls were as attractive as the outside was grim and forbidding. Balconies ran around three sides of the inclosure, tall, thin, straight pine poles, rising three stories high, supporting them, each pole fluttering a flag at the top. The balconies were all festooned with branches of living green.

Inside, the king and his men found ample accommodations; their rooms were carpeted with moss and with flowers, forming a variety of color and yielding a softness to the foot which the artificial piles of eastern looms would have attempted to rival in vain. Here for three days the royal party was entertained. Hunting in the forest gave them prodigious appetites, and there was no criticism of the cooking. The supply of food and drink was lavish in the extreme; fish from the river and loch, game from the moors and venison from the hills.

It was evening of the third day when the cavalcade set out again for the priory. The chief, Finlay MacNab, accompanied his guests down the valley, and when some distance from the castle of logs James smote him on the shoulder, copying thus his own astonishing action.

"Sir Finlay," he cried, "a king's hand should be no less potent than a king's sword, and thus I create thee a knight of my realm, for never before has monarch been so royally entertained, and now I pause here to look once more on your castle of pine."

So they all stayed progress and turned their eyes toward the wooden palace they had left.

"If it were built of stone," said the pope's legate, "it would be the strongest house in the world as it is the largest."

"A bulwark of bones is better than a castle of stones," said Sir Finlay. "That is an old Highland saying with us, which means that a brave following is the best ward. I will show you my bulwark of bones."

And with that, bowing to the king as if to ask permission, he raised his bugle to his lips and blew a blast. Instantly from the corner of the further bastion a torch flamed forth, and that torch lighted the one next to it, and this its neighbor, so that speedily a line of fire ran along the outlines of the castle, marking out the square towers and the round, lining the curtain, the smaller towers, turrets and parapets. Then at the top of the bailey wall a circle of Highlanders lit torch after torch, and thus was the whole castle illumined by a circle of fire. The huge edifice was etched in flame against the sombre background of the high mountain.

"Confess, legate," cried the king, "that you never saw anything more beautiful, even in fair Italy."

"I am willing to admit as much," replied the Roman.

Another blast from the bugle and all the torches on the castle itself disappeared, although the fire on the bailey wall remained intact. From machicolated tower, keep, peel and curtain, the nimble Highlanders, torchless, scrambled down, cheering as they came.

For a moment the castle walls were alive with fluttering tartans, strongly illuminated by the torches from the outer bailey. Each man held his breath while this perilous acrobatic performance was being accomplished, and silence reigned over the royal party until suddenly broken by the Italian.

"Highlander," he cried, "your castle is on fire."

"Ay," said the Highlander calmly, raising his bugle again to his lips.

At the next blast those on the bailey wall thrust their torches, still burning, among the chinks of the logs and swarmed to the ground as speedily and as safely as those on the main building. Now the lighted torches that had been thrown on the roof of the castle, disappearing a moment from sight, gave evidence of their existence. Here and there a long tongue of flame sprang up and died down again.

"Can nothing be done to save the palace?" shouted the excitable Frenchman. "The waterfall! the waterfall! Let us go back or the castle will be destroyed."

"Stand where you are," said the chief, "and you will see a sight worth coming north for."

Now, almost with the suddenness of an explosion, great sheets of flame rose, towering into a mountain of fire. The logs themselves seemed to redden as the light glowed through ever crevice between them. The bastions, the bailey walls, were great wheels of flame, encircling a palace that had all the vivid radiance of molten gold. The valley for miles up and down was lighter than the sun ever made it.

"Chieftain," said the legate in an awed whisper, "is this conflagration accident or design?"

"It is our custom," replied MacNab. "A monarch's pathway must be lighted, and it is not fitting that a residence once honored by our king should ever again be occupied by any one less noble. The pine tree is the badge of my clan. At my behest the pine trees sheltered the king, and now, at the blast of my bugle, it sends forth to the glen its farewell of flame."



# BRIGHTEST PARAGRAPHER IN AMERICA.

IN the death of Harry L. Merrick of the Washington Post the country lost probably the brightest writer of editorial paragraphs modern journalism has produced. For the last seven years Merrick had been writing a column of bright and terse comment upon men and events which was not equaled anywhere else in the country.

He had made the Washington Post famous, and his own fame had grown with it. His comments were so concise, and yet so pointed, that in a few lines they expressed more than is usually contained in a long, labored article from another pen. With a strongly developed sense of humor, an insight into politics which long experience with politicians had given him, and a cynical disbelief in the professions and pretensions of most men, Merrick had developed to a wonderful degree the faculty of summing up a subject in a few words, and pointing to the very heart of the matter.

The brevity of his paragraphs enhanced their wit, while their obvious truthfulness made them always impressive.

His range was of the widest.

He was able to dissect a situation or a condition existing far away from the capital with the same excellent judgment and full knowledge that made his observation about men in Washington so striking.

Merrick was known to nearly all the public men of the country, and was on terms of friendly intimacy with many of them. This did not in any way interfere with his work, and he directed his shafts at friends and foes alike, without either fear or favor. There was never anything malicious in what he said, but there was always a striving for truth, and a degree of biting sarcasm for men who made sham and false pretense the cloak of their real motives.

When it was recently announced that Senator Quay was going to Harrisburg to personally supervise the work of the legislature, and various reasons and excuses were offered by friendly newspapers for his visit, Merrick summed the matter up by saying:

"Perhaps Senator Quay has gone to Harrisburg to tell Governor Pennypacker the true story of that statehood fight."

One of the greatest compliments ever paid Merrick came from the late President McKinley. He knew and admired Merrick, and was a constant reader of his editorial comment. The last presidential campaign was opening, and Senator Hanna was talking to the president about the character of literature the national committee intended sending through the country.

"If you could only get Harry Merrick," said the president, "they would not only mean something, but the whole country would read them."

Merrick was an Ohio man, but he was always a Democrat, from which it can be inferred that Mr. McKinley's suggestion was based upon sincere admiration.

As illustrating his brevity, a paragraph written upon the battle of Manila bay is strikingly forceful. Admiral Dewey regards it as altogether the best thing he has read regarding that battle.

The news had come in, and editorials were being written in every newspaper office in the country.

Merrick looked over the dispatches, and this is what he wrote:

"Admiral Dewey Sundayed in Manila bay."

It was all that was needed. The news columns told the story of the fight, and no other comment was wanted.

Yet at the time this single line probably impressed readers with the importance of Dewey's achievement, the courage and determination he displayed and the sweeping character of his victory better than a column could have done.

A few specimens of Merrick's work will serve to show how comprehensive was his grasp of affairs, and how concisely he summed up a situation.

In the last column he wrote for the Post, he said:

"The Pennsylvania legislature declines to legalize anything so wicked as betting on horse races. The Pennsylvania legislature are sure-thing men."

The story had just come in showing that Senator Stone of Missouri had been summoned to testify before the grand jury respecting his connection with legislation affecting a baking powder company. Merrick had this to say:

"However, the Missouri brand of Republicanism is too impotent to do much rising on the baking powder scandal."

Here is another of interest in Pennsylvania:

"We are unable to understand why the Pennsylvania politicians should object to newspaper publicity. It has not materially affected the boodling business in that state."

The following paragraphs are culled at random from recent work by Merrick, and their pertinency to the news of the day is easily perceived:

"It seems that there are some railroad presidents who object to the merging process. The more mergers the fewer railroad presidents."

"The Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson can be presented to the next Democratic convention as the man who has actually passed through the fire."

"Mr. Jim Hill is now having some experience with the smile that won't come on."

"Our constables in the Philippines are reducing the expense of the Filipino exhibit at the St. Louis exposition by killing off a number of the Moro leaders who expected us to pay their way over and entertain them."

"We infer from the pale condition of the esteemed Skagway Alaskan that the weather up that way is still cool and the ink doesn't distribute evenly."

"The Brooklyn postmaster says he doesn't believe there has been any irregularities in the postoffice department. There is nothing like the long distance viewpoint."

"The south will not mind as long as Grover doesn't dine with Booker."

"Jim Tillman took considerable time to make up his mind to kill Editor Gonzales. Perhaps that is why he fears that he should not be hurried to a trial for the crime."

"The Hon. Josiah Quincy has a vice presidential boom with adjustable couplers which can be readily attached to any sound presidential boom that heaves in sight."

"Do you know of any successful men who will admit their success is the result of reading the magazine articles on 'How to Be Successful?'"

"It is fortunate for St. Louis that the success of the exposition doesn't depend upon the quality of her aldermen."

"Of course, Lawyer Beck will be able to lay aside the anti-trust spectacles of Assistant Attorney General Beck."

The most remarkable feature of Merrick's work was that while he had kept it up for years, it never showed the slightest indication of deterioration.—North American.